

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

which, though originally a one-sheet bulletin, eventually became a well-edited newspaper of six pages. A rather unusual innovation in Teheran was the appearance of a number of periodicals in the Polish language, such as *Zew* and *Polak w Iranie*. These periodicals found their *raison d'être* in the presence of a large Polish refugee colony and, for a time, of a Polish army in Iran.¹⁰

In addition to all these publications, several legations were issuing bulletins that were not available at the newspaper stands and distributing them among the politically conscious Iranians and to the foreign colony in Iran. Thus, the American Embassy distributed a mimeographed bulletin, and the Belgian and Polish legations published printed bulletins, *Les Nouvelles de Belgique* and *La Nouvelle Europe*, respectively. As a source of information for Iranians anxious to learn the truth of international developments, these foreign-language publications played a useful role. Since they were largely exempt from the restriction of government censorship, they contributed much to the clarification and elaboration of political controversy then prevalent.

The editorials in the Iranian press generally reflected strong criticism of the old regime and of present conditions. Frequent demands for improvement in every field of national life appeared. But in those years the press generally avoided any debate on foreign policy. The joint invasion of Iran by Britain and Russia received cautious treatment in the editorials, for no one openly dared criticize these countries. If any reference was made to either Britain or Russia, it was usually under the all-embracing name of the Allies, to whom affirmations of loyalty were lavishly extended. With the

exception of a small group of Communist newspapers, which adhered to a consistent

io Between 1939 and 1941 these refugees, both men and women, had been arrested by the Soviet authorities in eastern Poland and deported as slave laborers to Siberia and Turkestan. Of the two million Poles who met this fate, nearly 45,000 were permitted to leave Russia under the terms of the Sikorski-Stalin agreement of 1941. They were evacuated to Iran by the British authorities. Furthermore, about 80,000 former Polish prisoners of war hi Russia were permitted to join the Polish army established on the territory of the Soviet Union in 1941-1942. Under the command of General Anders, who had just been released from the Lubianka prison after two years of captivity, this army was moved by inter-Allied agreement to northern Iraq. There it was to defend the Middle Eastern oil fields at the time of the German thrust toward the Caucasus. It passed in transit through Iran.